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EXAMINER

MEINECKE DIAZ, SUSANNA M

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3623

DATE MAILED: 10/11/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

*HL*

**Office Action Summary**

Application No.

10/670,358

Applicant(s)

PHILLIPS ET AL.

Examiner

Susanna M. Diaz

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 26 September 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 20-23, 25-39, 44-47, 49-52 and 54-63 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 20-23, 25-39, 44-47, 49-52 and 54-63 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 26 September 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08) \*  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 12/30/04; 12/14/04 (5 IDSs);
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### **DETAILED ACTION**

1. Claims 20-23, 25-39, 44-47, 49-52, and 54-63 are presented for examination.

#### ***Specification***

2. The specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. See 37 CFR 1.75(d)(1) and MPEP § 608.01(o). Correction of the following is required: The claims use the terminology "stored value card" while the specification utilizes the terminology "purchase card." Please consistently use the same terminology throughout the specification and claims.

#### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

3. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

4. Claims 33 and 63 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 33 and 63 are directed toward a system comprising an "issuer" as a system element. According to the specification, the "issuer" is a business or human entity. It is improper to claim a human or group of humans (i.e., a business as an abstract concept as opposed to defined physical structure) as a system element.

Claim 33 is directed toward a system comprising a "card processing center" as a system element. According to the specification, the "card processor center" is a

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business or human entity. It is improper to claim a human or group of humans (i.e., a business as an abstract concept as opposed to defined physical structure) as a system element.

Appropriate correction is required.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

5. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

6. Claims 20-23, 25-39, 44-47, 49-52, 54-57, 59, 60, 62, and 63 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Albrecht (U.S. Patent No. 5,984,180).

Albrecht discloses a method for using a stored value card having associated card identification data comprising the following steps:

[Claim 20] issuing the card (col. 5, lines 45-47);

purchasing the card by a purchaser, in any denomination having cash value, the purchasing step being performed during a card purchase transaction (col. 4, lines 25-26; col. 5, lines 14-44);

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selecting an identifier by the purchaser, wherein the identifier is to be subsequently used with the card to verify an authorized user of the card (col. 4, lines 23-24; col. 5, lines 52-53); and

activating the card after the selecting step by transmitting over a network to a card processing center the identifier and the card identification data (col. 4, lines 20-36);

wherein the identifier, the card identification data, and a card value amount are stored in a card account accessible by the card processing center (col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65),

and wherein the card is available for use after the activating step is performed (col. 5, lines 45-60; col. 6, lines 10-13);

[Claim 21] establishing the card account at the card processing center, the account being uniquely associated with the card (col. 5, lines 45-54 – The card corresponds to a secondary account with a specific account number);

[Claim 22] adding value to the card value amount (col. 5, lines 37-44; col. 6, lines 52-53);

[Claim 23] wherein the card transaction comprises purchasing a good or a service, wherein the step of purchasing a good or service comprises decrementing the card value amount by the cost of the good or service (col. 6, lines 13-38);

[Claim 25] decrementing the card value amount by an amount corresponding to the purchase price (col. 6, lines 13-38);

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[Claim 26] wherein the card is inactive before the activating step is performed (Fig. 5A; col. 5, lines 45-55 – Each card is customized to a specific account number and gift recipient, thereby implying that the card is inactive prior to the disclosed activation);

[Claim 27] wherein the card value amount corresponds to an amount of payment tendered in the purchasing step (col. 4, lines 25-26; col. 5, lines 14-44);

[Claim 28] wherein the activating step is performed by a gift donor and the card value amount is indicative of a gift amount (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, lines 45-60);

[Claim 29] wherein the stored value card is issued in cooperation with a sponsor (col. 5, lines 55-60).

Albrecht discloses a method for processing a stored value card having associated card identification data, the method comprising the following steps:

[Claim 30] assigning to the card an identifier to be used with the card identification data, the purchase of the card being performed during a card purchase transaction (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65); and

after the identifier is selected, transmitting to a card processing center over a network the card identification data, the identifier, and a card value amount, wherein the card processing center establishes a unique card account, and stores the card identification data, the identifier, and a card value amount, and wherein the card identification data and identifier are used to subsequently verify an authorized user of the card (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65);

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[Claim 31] distributing the card to a user of the card (col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65);

[Claim 32] adding value to the card value amount (col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65).

Albrecht discloses a system for using a stored value card having associated card identification data, the system comprising:

[Claim 33] an issuer that issues the card, the card not yet being activated (col. 5, lines 45-60 – Sponsoring institutions offer cards that are not activated until customized for a specific recipient);

a terminal that receives card identification data and an identifier provided by the card user, transmits over a network the card identification data and the identifier, wherein a card purchaser purchases the card during a card purchase transaction (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65); and

a card processing center in communication with the terminal over a network to receive the card identification data and the identifier, the card processing center activating the card after the selection of the identifier, the card processing center further establishing a unique card account and storing the card account, the card identification data, the identifier, and the card value amount, enabling the subsequent verification of the validity of an authorized card user (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65);

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[Claim 34] wherein the issuer comprises a bank (Fig. 5A – “First National Bank” is an example of a card issuer);

[Claim 35] wherein the card is distributed to a user of the card (col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65);

[Claim 36] wherein an additional amount is added to the card value amount (col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65).

Albrecht discloses a method for activating a stored value card having associated card identification data, the method comprising the following steps:

[Claim 37] after selection of an identifier, receiving over a network card identification data and an identifier, wherein a card is purchased during a card purchase transaction (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65);

activating the card upon receipt of the card identification data and the identifier (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65);

establishing a unique card account (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65); and

storing the card identification data, the identifier, and a card value amount to enable verification of an authorized user of the card (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65);

[Claim 38] distributing the card to a user of the card (col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65);



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[Claim 39] adding an additional amount to the card value amount (col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65).

Albrecht discloses a method for providing a transaction system, comprising:

[Claim 44] issuing a stored value card (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65);

purchasing the card, by a card purchaser, during a card purchase transaction, the card purchase transaction being performed after the issuing step, wherein the card has an initial cash value at a first time which is no earlier than a time at which the purchasing step is started (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65);

selecting personal identification data, the personal identification data comprising an identifier for verifying an identity of an authorized user of the card (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65); and

activating the card by transmitting activation data to a processing center, wherein the activation data include the identifier, wherein the activating step is performed after the selecting step, and wherein the identifier is stored in a storage device which is accessible by the processing center (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65).

Albrecht discloses a method for activating a stored value card comprising:

[Claim 45] assigning to a card, no earlier than at the time of a card purchase transaction, personal identification data, the personal identification data comprising an

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identifier for verifying an identity of an authorized user of the card, wherein the card is purchased by a purchaser during the card purchase transaction, wherein the card is not associated with a personal identifier (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65); and

transmitting the personal identification data to a processing center, wherein the processing center stores the personal identification data (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65).

Albrecht discloses a stored value card transaction system, comprising:

[Claim 46] a transmitting device which transmits personal identification data selected at a selection time, the card being purchased by a purchaser during a card purchase transaction, wherein, earlier than the selection time, the card is not associated with a personal identifier used to enable verification of validity of a user of the card and wherein the personal identification data is transmitted prior to the card purchase transaction (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65); and

a processing center in communication with the transmitting device and configured to perform the steps of:

receiving the personal identification data from the transmitting device (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65),

activating the card upon receipt of the personal identification data (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65),

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storing the personal identification data (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65), and

using the personal identification data to enable verification of validity of a user of the card (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65).

Albrecht discloses a method for activating a stored value card comprising:

[Claim 47] receiving personal identification data selected at a selection time, the card being purchased by a purchaser during a card purchase transaction, wherein, prior to the selection time, the card is not associated with the personal identification data for verifying an identity of an authorized user of the card, and wherein the personal identification data are received at a receipt time which is no earlier than a starting time of the card purchase transaction (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65);

activating the card at a time no earlier than the receipt time (col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65 -- Sponsoring institutions offer cards that are not activated until customized for a specific recipient); and

storing the personal identification data to thereby enable verification of an authorized user of the card (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65).

Albrecht discloses a method for using a stored value card comprising:

[Claim 49] issuing a stored value card (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65); and

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performing a card purchase transaction (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65), the card purchase transaction comprising:

selecting a set of personal identification data, the personal identification data being for verifying validity of a user of the card subsequent to the card purchase transaction (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65); and

purchasing the card by a card purchaser, wherein, prior to the card purchase transaction, the card is not associated with a personal identifier for verifying validity of a user of the card for a card transaction (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65).

Albrecht discloses a method for activating a stored value card comprising:

[Claim 50] assigning to the card, no earlier than a starting time of a card purchase transaction, personal identification data, the personal identification data being for verifying an identity of an authorized user of the card, wherein a purchaser purchases the card during the card purchase transaction, wherein, earlier than the starting time, the card is not associated with a personal identifier for verifying validity of a use of the card, and wherein the personal identifier is selected during the card purchase transaction (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65).

Albrecht discloses a system for using a stored value card comprising:

[Claim 51] a transmitting device that transmits personal identification data selected at a selection time, the card being purchased during a card purchase transaction, wherein

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the card is not associated with a personal identifier earlier than the selection time, wherein the personal identification data are transmitted no earlier than a starting time of the card purchase transaction, and wherein the personal identifier is for verifying validity of a user of the card (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65).

Albrecht discloses a method for activating a stored value card comprising:

[Claim 52] receiving personal identification data selected at a selection time, wherein, earlier than the selection time, the card is not associated with a personal identifier for verifying validity of a use of the card, the card being purchased by a purchaser during a card purchase transaction, wherein the personal identification data are received at a receipt time which is no earlier than a starting time of the card purchase transaction, and wherein the personal identification data are for verifying an identity of an authorized user of the card (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65).

Albrecht discloses a method for activating a stored value card having associated card identification data, the method comprising:

[Claim 54] assigning to the card an identifier to be used with the card identification data, the purchase of the card being performed during a card purchase transaction (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65); and

after the identifier is selected, transmitting to a card processing center over a network the card identification data and the identifier, wherein the card processing

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center activates the card and stores the card identification data (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65); and

storing the identifier and the card value amount to subsequently verify an authorized user of the card (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65);

[Claim 55] distributing the card to a user of the card (col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65);

[Claim 56] adding value to the card value amount (col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65).

Albrecht discloses a computer implemented method for issuing a stored value card affiliated with a predetermined transaction processing network and an issuer, comprising:

[Claim 57] presenting a purchaser with an opportunity to buy a stored value card (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65);

receiving funds provided by the purchaser for a purchase amount for the stored value card (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65);

establishing a stored value account for a recipient designated by the purchaser, wherein the stored value account includes the recipient's name, the stored value card account number, and the purchase amount (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65);

issuing the stored value card, wherein the stored value card is usable for purchases wherever the transaction processing network is accepted for purchases (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65); and

receiving notification that the stored value card has been received (col. 6, lines 43-53 – The primary account holder may be alerted that the value of the secondary account is depleted so that the primary account holder has the option of placing more value in the secondary account. These alerts are an indication that the stored value card has been received, and used);

[Claim 59] wherein the recipient is not the purchaser (abstract – The card is given as a gift);

[Claim 60] wherein the transaction processing network is a credit network (col. 5, lines 57-58).

Albrecht discloses a method of using a stored value card having associated card identification data, comprising:

[Claim 62] issuing the stored value card without any associated personal identification data (col. 5, lines 45-60 – Sponsoring institutions offer cards that are not activated until customized for a specific recipient); and

performing by a card purchaser a card purchase transaction comprising the steps of:

selecting by the card purchaser a set of personal identification data, the set of personal identification data being for verifying the validity of transactions

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subsequent to the card purchase transaction (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65), and

purchasing the stored value card by the card purchaser (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65).

Albrecht discloses a system for using a stored value card having associated card identification data, comprising:

[Claim 63] an issuer for issuing the stored value card (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65); and

a receiving device for receiving a set of personal identification data during a card purchase transaction in which a card purchaser purchases the stored value card, the set of personal identification data being selected by the card purchaser during the card purchase transaction, the set of personal identification data being for verifying the validity of transactions subsequent to the card purchase transaction (col. 4, lines 20-36; col. 5, line 14 through col. 6, line 65).

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.



8. Claims 58 and 61 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Albrecht (U.S. Patent No. 5,984,180), as applied to claim 57 above.

[Claim 58] As per claim 58, Albrecht's gift credit card is given as a gift to a recipient that is not the purchaser; however, the Examiner submits that the recited structure and functionality would not be affected by whether or not the recipient is the purchaser. The intended recipient only affects the personal identification data, which is non-functional data since the fact that the name of the credit card is Person A versus Person B does not alter the recited structure or functionality. Nevertheless, the Examiner submits that it is old and well-known in the art of financial payment cards for a person to buy him/herself a stored value card in order to minimize the financial risk of carrying around a payment card with a lower balance in case the card is stolen. For example, there is less risk to a card owner of losing a stored value card with a maximum value of \$50 or \$100 stored on it as opposed to losing a credit card with a \$20,000 limit or line of credit. Therefore, the Examiner submits that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to modify Albrecht's invention such that a primary account holder is encouraged not only to purchase gift credit cards for other recipients, but also for him/herself in order to minimize the financial risk of carrying around a payment card with a lower balance in case the card is stolen.

[Claim 61] Regarding claim 61, Albrecht's gift credit cards operate on a predetermined credit network (col. 5, lines 57-58); Albrecht does not expressly teach that the transaction processing network may also be a debit network. However,

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Albrecht discloses a payment option in which "the authorized value is charged to the primary account at one time" (col. 5, lines 39-40) and the primary account holder does not reload the value of the gift credit card (col. 6, lines 53-55). In conformance with this option, the gift credit card effectively utilizes debit card functionality over a credit card network since the balance of the gift credit card is prepaid and limited to this prepaid amount. Furthermore, Albrecht cites Visa and MasterCard as examples of the credit networks associated with the gift credit card (col. 5, lines 57-58). Official Notice is taken that it is old and well-known in the art that Visa and MasterCard offer both credit and debit capabilities over their respective networks. Therefore, the Examiner submits that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of Applicant's invention to modify Albrecht's gift credit cards to function over debit networks as well as credit networks in order to make the card more compatible with various types of networks, thereby making it more convenient for its customers to use.

### ***Double Patenting***

9. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

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Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

10. Claims 20-23, 25-39, 44-47, 49-52, and 54-63 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 17-21 and 38-42 of U.S. Patent No. 6,615,189. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because claims 20-23, 25-39, 44-47, 49-52, and 54-63 recite various permutations of the limitations recited in claims 17-21 and 38-42 of U.S. Patent No. 6,615,189. Elimination of an element or its functions has been held to be obvious as per *In re Karlson*, 136 USPQ 184, 186; 311 F2d 581 (CCPA 1963).

11. Claims 20-23, 25-39, 44-47, 49-52, and 54-63 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-18 of U.S. Patent No. 6,892,187. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because claims 20-23, 25-39, 44-47, 49-52, and 54-63 recite various permutations of the limitations recited in claims 1-18 of U.S. Patent No. 6,892,187. Elimination of an element or its functions has been held to be obvious as per *In re Karlson*, 136 USPQ 184, 186; 311 F2d 581 (CCPA 1963).

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***Conclusion***

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Susanna M. Diaz whose telephone number is (571) 272-6733. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 10 am - 6 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Tariq Hafiz can be reached on (571) 272-6729. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

  
Susanna M. Diaz  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 3623

September 27, 2005